

## **Historic, archived document**

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



# Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program

## Fiscal 2010

### Competitive Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program

#### Description and Application Process



**Food Assistance & Nutrition  
Research Program**

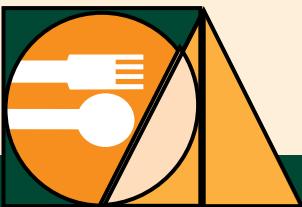
## **Abstract**

The Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program (FANRP) of the USDA Economic Research Service (ERS) announces the availability of funds and a request for applications to conduct research that focuses on USDA's domestic food assistance and nutrition programs. The three priority research areas are (1) Food Assistance and Children's Well-Being, (2) Interactions Between the Built Environment and Food Assistance Programs, and (3) Using Behavioral Economics and Incentives To Promote Child Nutrition. ERS will accept proposals under this program for funding levels, inclusive of indirect cost when applicable, between \$100,000 and \$400,000 (for the duration of the grant and/or the cooperative agreement, not to exceed 3 years). Total funding available for this research is approximately \$2.2-\$2.7 million. The deadline for proposal submission is April 12, 2010.

**Keywords:** Food assistance programs, children's well-being, built environment, behavioral economics, incentives, SNAP, WIC, child nutrition programs, food security, low-income people, Competitive Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program, ERS, FANRP, USDA

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and, where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



## **Checklist**

All proposals submitted under the Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program (FANRP) must contain the applicable elements described in this brochure and should be submitted through Grants.gov by April 12, 2010. The following checklist has been prepared to assist in ensuring that the proposal is complete and in the proper order prior to mailing:

✓ Application for Federal Domestic Assistance-Short Organizational (SF-424)

- Is all required information accurate and complete?
- Is the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number: 10.253?
- Has the authorized organizational representative signed the SF-424?
- Is the CFDA Title: Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program?
- Have you included a telephone number, fax number, and/or e-mail address where a message may be left for you?
- Have you included the requested total funding amount from the budget form?

✓ Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)

- Are budget items complete?
- Is the summary budget included?
- Is the funding level total in line k within the stated limit of \$400,000 for the full duration of the project proposal?
- Is the budget duration within the stated limit of 3 years?

✓ Proposal and All Attachments in PDF

✓ Project Summary Page

- Is the project title listed at the top?
- Has the Project Summary been included?
- Does the summary include research objectives?
- Is the summary no more than 250 words?
- Do the name and institution of the Principal Investigator, co-investigators, and subcontractors appear on the page?
- Does the page include the total amount requested?
- Does the page include the start and end date?

✓ Table of Contents

- Are page numbers included for each item?

✓ Project Description

- Is the project fully described?
- Does this section adhere to the format and page limitations, as specified?
- Does this section begin as page 1, as specified?
- Does the project description contain a tentative schedule or workplan of major steps of study, including a staffing plan?
- Is a budget narrative included?

✓ Citations to Project Description

- Are all references cited?
- Are all citations referenced?
- Do all citations contain a title and are they in accepted journal format?

✓ Documentation from Collaborator(s), or Host Institution (where appropriate)

✓ Vitae and Publications List(s)

- Are vitae included for the Principal Investigator and co-investigators, senior associates, and other key project personnel (including subcontractors—see instructions)?
- Are the vitae current and pertinent?
- Are the publications lists complete and limited to the last 5 years?

✓ Indirect Cost Rate Schedule

- For reimbursement of indirect costs, is a copy included of the applicant's indirect cost rate schedule that reports the applicant's federally negotiated audited rate?

✓ General

- Does the proposal conform to all format and page limitations and deadline requirements?

---

## **Contents**

<b>Overview .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Authority .....	1
Applicable Federal Statutes, Regulations, and Guidelines .....	2
<b>Priority Research Areas.....</b>	<b>3</b>
Food Assistance and Children's Well-Being .....	4
Interactions Between the Built Environment and Food Assistance Programs .....	5
Using Behavioral Economics and Incentives To Promote Child Nutrition .....	6
<b>Eligibility Requirements, Award Types, and Indirect and Other Costs.....</b>	<b>8</b>
Types of Awards.....	8
Indirect and Other Costs .....	8
<b>Peer Review of Applications.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Evaluation Factors and Criteria.....</b>	<b>10</b>
Research Merit of the Proposal .....	10
Overall Approach.....	10
Workplan, Budget, and Cost-Effectiveness .....	10
Key Personnel .....	10
<b>How To Obtain Application Materials .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Application Process.....</b>	<b>12</b>
Overview.....	12
Submission Requirements .....	12
Format and Contents of Proposals.....	12
Application for Federal Domestic Assistance-Short Organizational ....	12
Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs .....	13
Project Summary Page .....	14
Table of Contents .....	15
Project Description.....	15
Proposed Research Products .....	16
Citations to Project Description .....	17
Collaborative Arrangements.....	17
Vitae and Publications List(s) .....	17
Indirect Cost Rate Schedule .....	17
Current and Pending Support .....	18
Additions to Project Description .....	18
What/When/Where To Submit .....	19
<b>Award Administration .....</b>	<b>20</b>
Duration of Awards .....	20
Management Information .....	20
Notice of Award .....	20
Financial Obligations.....	20
Release of Information .....	21



---

## **Overview**

Applications are invited for competitive grant and cooperative agreement awards from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for fiscal 2010. This document provides background on the research areas of interest to the Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program (FANRP), application procedures, deadlines for submission, and guidance for the application process.

USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) anticipates awarding approximately \$2.2-\$2.7 million in fiscal 2010 for competitive grants and cooperative agreements. ERS will accept proposals under this program for funding levels, inclusive of indirect cost when applicable, between \$100,000 and \$400,000 (for the duration of the grant and/or the cooperative agreement, not to exceed 3 years). (Parties interested in smaller grants may want to consider ERS's RIDGE Program. See the FANRP website at [www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/foodnutritionassistance/funding/ridge.htm](http://www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/foodnutritionassistance/funding/ridge.htm) for more information.)

Applications for this program must be submitted electronically through the Grants.gov website at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). The Grants.gov website is the single access point to electronically find and apply for competitive Federal funding opportunities and manage grants from all Federal grantmaking agencies in one place.

First-time users of Grants.gov should go to the "Apply for Grants" tab on the website and carefully read and follow the steps listed in order to apply. Your organization will need to be registered with the Central Contractor Registry (CCR) at [www.ccr.gov](http://www.ccr.gov). Your organization also will need a Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number. A DUNS number is a unique nine-character identification number provided by the commercial company, Dun & Bradstreet (D&B). To investigate if your organization already has a DUNS number or to obtain a DUNS number, contact Dun & Bradstreet at 1-866-705-5711. Be sure to complete the Marketing Partner ID (MPIN) and Electronic Business Primary Point of Contact fields during the CCR registration process. These are mandatory fields that are required when submitting grant applications through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

## **Authority**

The Authority for this program is contained in 7 U.S.C. 292, 411, 427, 1441a, 1621-1627, 1704, 1761-68, 2201, 2202, 3103, 3291, 3311, 3504; 22 U.S.C. 3101; 42 U.S.C. 1891-93; 44 U.S.C. 3501-11; 50 U.S.C. 2061 et seq., 2251 et seq. Under this program, subject to the availability of funds, the Secretary may award competitive grants and cooperative agreements for the support of research projects to further USDA food and nutrition assistance programs, especially the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)—formerly the Food Stamp Program—Child Nutrition Programs (School Breakfast, National School Lunch, Summer Food Service, and Child and Adult Care Food Programs), and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). Proposals may be submitted by any State agricultural experiment station, college, university, other research institution or organization, Federal agency, private organization, corporation, or individual.



## **Applicable Federal Statutes, Regulations, and Guidelines**

Applicable Federal statutes, regulations, and guidelines include the following: (a) guidelines to be followed when submitting grant proposals and cooperative agreements and rules governing the evaluation of proposals; (b) the USDA Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations, 7 CFR Part 3019; (c) the USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, 7 CFR Part 3015; (d) the USDA Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments, 7 CFR Part 3016; and (e) Cooperative Research Agreement 7 USC 3318b.

The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number for this program is 10.253. The CFDA Title is Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program.



## **Priority Research Areas**

ERS is accepting proposals for economic research that focuses on USDA's domestic food assistance and nutrition programs. All proposals should have important implications for these programs. Anticipated funding in fiscal 2010 for competitive grants and cooperative agreements is approximately \$2.2-\$2.7 million, of which up to \$750,000 is available specifically for projects described in Section III on page 6. Funds are to support research and evaluation activities. Proposals should not request funding for the development of new education or outreach materials, or to provide direct benefits to households or individuals.

USDA administers 15 food and nutrition assistance programs that provide children and low-income people access to food, a healthful diet, and nutrition education. At some point during the year, about one in five Americans participates in at least one of these programs that include the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)—formerly the Food Stamp Program—WIC, the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Information on these programs can be found at USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (the agency responsible for managing the programs) website at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/>.

Three research areas (listed below) highlight priorities for proposed competitive grants or cooperative agreements. The suggested topics within each Priority Research area are intended to stimulate research proposals. **Applicants may propose other policy-relevant topics with justification.**

ERS encourages proposals that use existing nationally representative cross-sectional or longitudinal data, or survey data enhanced with other extant data. For a description of nationally representative surveys useful to food and nutrition assistance studies, see table 1 on page 7 or go to [www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/foodnutritionassistance/data/](http://www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/foodnutritionassistance/data/). Use of other datasets is also acceptable, with justification. Proposals using data that are not publicly available must demonstrate access to the data. Proposals addressing areas described in Section III on page 6 may be expected to collect new data on a relatively small scale.

FANRP has a large inventory of research projects. To avoid duplication, applicants are encouraged to read project descriptions in the FANRP database, available at [www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FoodNutritionAssistance/Projects](http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FoodNutritionAssistance/Projects).

The three priority research areas for this year's competitive grants or cooperative agreement proposals are:

- I. Food Assistance and Children's Well-Being**
- II. Interactions Between the Built Environment and Food Assistance Programs, and**
- III. Using Behavioral Economics and Incentives To Promote Child Nutrition.**



## **I. Food Assistance and Children's Well-Being**

Most of USDA's food assistance and nutrition programs offer benefits to children, either directly (such as through the school meal programs) or indirectly (such as through SNAP benefits that target the entire household). FANRP is interested in economic research on the impact of food assistance and nutrition programs on children and their well-being.

For example, FANRP is interested in understanding how participation in specific food assistance and nutrition programs affects:

- Children's weight status/obesity, including the dynamics of obesity and its consequences;
- Children's food insecurity, including the dynamics of food insecurity, the consequences of persistent food insecurity, and relationships between food insecurity and obesity;
- Children's dietary intake and diet quality, including program impacts on household food expenditures, food purchases, food choices, and nutrient intake; and the tradeoffs in balancing work, child care, and food shopping and preparation; and
- Other outcomes, such as breastfeeding practices, nutrition knowledge, physical activity, health status, and cognitive development and educational outcomes.

FANRP is also interested in economic research on how child nutrition and well-being are affected when food assistance households:

- Participate in multiple assistance programs (including nonfood assistance programs, such as those for energy and housing);
- Experience economic shocks, such as job loss, divorce, or disability, unanticipated housing and asset devaluation, inflation, or increasing health care costs; or
- Stop participating in food assistance and nutrition programs or transition between programs (such as a child going from WIC to the National School Lunch Program).

Finally, program regulations and operations can affect participation decisions and benefits provided, and therefore child nutrition and well-being. One topic of special interest is:

- How the school meal reimbursement system for free, reduced-price, and paid lunches—including issues of internal and external cross-subsidization—affects meal quality, school pricing decisions, the provision of competitive foods, and student participation.



## **II. Interactions Between the Built Environment and Food Assistance Programs**

USDA's food assistance and nutrition programs operate within a "built environment" that includes food store outlets, local program offices or clinics, schools and school cafeterias, local school wellness policies, and program policies.

One aspect of interaction between food assistance programs and the built environment is *access to program services*. FANRP is interested in such topics as:

- Impacts of program office features (such as location and ease of access, transit service, hours of operations, internet or phone application) on program participation decisions;
- Extent to which alternative food programs—such as local food banks and Meals on Wheels—substitute or complement USDA food assistance programs, and affect program participation and diet quality;
- Costs and benefits of alternative policy choices aimed at improving program access, program targeting (e.g., working poor), and program integrity;
- How WIC-food redemption patterns differ when program benefits are distributed via Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) versus paper food instruments; and
- Impacts of State and local policies intended to promote child nutrition and wellness—such as restrictions on vending machines in schools—on participation in food assistance and nutrition programs, measures of diet quality, and other measures of child well-being.

Topics of interest relative to *food prices and food outlets* include:

- How locations, characteristics, inventory, and pricing of retail food outlets and restaurants affect consumers' food purchasing decisions and well-being of low-income populations;
- Impacts of the recent revisions to WIC food packages on market factors, food redemption patterns, food expenditures, food choices, and nutrient intakes;
- Price, expenditure, and income elasticities for food;
- Time and money costs of a "healthy" diet that is acceptable to consumers of varying backgrounds, and how these costs compare with the Thrifty Food Plan;
- To what extent shelter costs and other SNAP deductions compensate for geographic differences in food prices; and
- How alternative food procurement or delivery systems—such as use of DOD Fresh—affect school meal cost and quality and children's participation in school meals, and food and nutrient intake.

FANRP also is interested in cost-effective ways of collecting data on the local built environment and merging them with administrative or survey data.



### **III. Using Behavioral Economics and Incentives To Promote Child Nutrition**

Preliminary research by ERS and others suggests that insights from behavioral economics—which uses social, cognitive, and emotional factors to understand the economic decisions of consumers—have the potential to support students in making the choices they know are best for their nutrition, health, and achievement. FANRP seeks to extend this research in a collaborative effort with USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service to test such interventions in child nutrition program settings (schools and child care centers) or through “natural experiments,” such as from school foodservice systems using computerized point-of-sale systems to record participation and meal selections under alternative policies and practices.

Our primary interest is in demonstrating and assessing to what extent the application of behavioral economic theories can be used to identify interventions that affect food choices and consumption, as well as cost and other program parameters. Grants will generally focus in this initial year on small projects to generate and determine the feasibility of new interventions; funding may also be used to support expanded demonstration of promising interventions, along with an evaluation of their impact on the eating behaviors of students and other outcomes.

Some examples of potential strategies that could be demonstrated are listed below. However, because FANRP is interested in identifying creative and innovative school environment strategies, applicants should not feel constrained to the listed concepts:

- Offering nutritious choices as the default option—for example, by automatically providing vegetables with an entrée unless an additional effort is made by the student to switch to a less nutritious side dish;
- Allowing students (or their parents ) to pre-select foods before entering the foodservice line to avoid impulsive selections that may contribute to excess consumption;
- Allowing pre-payment for more nutritious foods, while requiring cash payment for other alternatives;
- Increasing the prominence, visibility, and accessibility of nutritious choices on the cafeteria line, while placing less healthful foods where they are hard to see and reach;
- Improving the dining environment through smaller group tables, improved lighting, reduced noise, and sufficient time to eat.

FANRP also seeks strategies suggested by behavioral economics that encourage foodservice administrators to implement changes that shape consumer demand toward healthier choices and related changes in food purchasing and meal planning information approaches that improve the program’s ability to meet specific nutritional goals while maintaining student acceptability and preventing waste and undue cost.



Table 1

**Examples of nationally representative datasets useful for studies of food and nutrition assistance programs and selected variables available**

Survey name	Selected variables available
ACS (American Community Survey)	SNAP, household characteristics
ATUS (American Time Use Survey)	Time use, self-reported weight and height
CE (Consumer Expenditure Survey)	Food expenditures, food prices, food quantities, SNAP
CPS (Current Population Survey)	SNAP, WIC, NSLP, SBP, food security
ECLS-B (Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort)	Infant feeding patterns, child's height and weight, food security, health indicators, cognitive development, SNAP, WIC, CACFP
ECLS-K (Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Class)	Child's weight and height, food security, health indicators, cognitive development, SNAP, NSLP, SBP, academic achievement
Food Stamp Program State Policy Database	SNAP
FSPAS (ERS Food Stamp Program Access Study Data Set)	Household characteristics and participation decisions for SNAP eligibles, applicants, recertifying, departing, and nonparticipants
National Sample of Food Stamp Program Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Transactions, 2003	Time, place, and amount of every purchase, store and household characteristics, SNAP
NHANES (National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey)	Height and weight, food and nutrient intake, dietary practices, health indicators, SNAP, WIC, NSLP, SBP
Nielsen Homescan Consumer Panel Survey <sup>1</sup>	Food expenditures, food prices, food quantities, store characteristics
PSID (Panel Study of Income Dynamics)	SNAP, WIC, NSLP, SBP
SHPPS (School Health Policies and Programs Study)	NSLP, SBP
SIPP (Survey of Income and Program Participation)	Food security, SNAP, WIC, NSLP, SBP
SNDA III (School Nutrition and Dietary Assessment Study)	Food and nutrient intakes, NSLP, SBP
SPD (Survey of Program Dynamics)	Food security, SNAP, WIC, NSLP, SBP

Note: For additional descriptions and links go to [www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/foodnutritionassistance/data/](http://www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/foodnutritionassistance/data/)

Acronyms: CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program), SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), NSLP (National School Lunch Program), SBP (School Breakfast Program), WIC (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children).

<sup>1</sup>ERS has acquired the Nielsen Homescan data for the years 1998-2008. Because the data are owned by Nielsen and are proprietary, use of the data is subject to the terms and the conditions of the contract under which the information was purchased. The contract limits the use of the data to issues of interest to the Department and allows sharing the data with external researchers when, as third-party consultants, the external researchers carry out the work of the Department. USDA-funded research agreements, therefore, can use these data subject to the terms of the contract.

---

## **Eligibility Requirements, Award Types, and Indirect and Other Costs**

The Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program (FANRP) may award competitive grants or cooperative agreements under this announcement. **Applicants need not specify the type of award in their proposal. FANRP reserves the right to determine the type of award.** The type of award made for a selected proposal will be governed by the nature and degree of involvement desired by FANRP in the project and the type of institution requesting funding (see “Authority,” page 1). In accordance with Federal statutes, the amount of indirect cost ERS will pay is governed by the type of award and the type of institution receiving the award.

Proposals may be submitted by any State agricultural experiment station, college, university, other research institution or organization, Federal, State, or county agencies, private organization, corporation, or individual. Proposals submitted by non-United States organizations will not be considered.

Proposals may include requests for conferences that bring together members of the interested research community to identify research needs, update information, or advance an area of research recognized as an integral part of the research effort.

### **Types of Awards**

- Grants: Grants will be awarded when the research topic does not require substantial involvement between ERS staff and the recipient during the performance of the award.
- Cooperative Agreements: Cooperative agreements will be awarded when the research topic requires more substantial involvement between ERS and the investigator(s). There are two types of cooperative agreements: cooperative research agreements and assistance-type cooperative agreements. In a cooperative research agreement, ERS staff and extramural researchers are close collaborators and contributors to the research; in an assistance-type cooperative agreement, the extramural researchers are responsible for conducting the greater part of the work on the project. Cooperative research agreements require both parties to contribute to the funding of the project; assistance-type cooperative agreements do not have this joint funding requirement.

### **Indirect and Other Costs**

Federal statutes dictate the amount of indirect costs that ERS pays by type of award and institution. In cooperative research agreements, ERS pays: no indirect costs to State cooperative institutions (i.e., land-grant universities and their constituent schools and departments); the negotiated indirect cost rate not to exceed 10 percent of total direct costs to nonprofit institutions other than State cooperative institutions; and the negotiated indirect cost rate not to exceed the audited rate of any federally recognized audit agency to other institutions. In competitive grants and assistance-type cooperative agreements, ERS pays the negotiated indirect cost rate not to exceed the audited rate of any federally recognized audit agency to State cooperative institutions and institutions other than State cooperative institutions and nonprofit institutions; and the negotiated indirect cost rate (no statutory limitation) to nonprofit institutions other than State cooperative institutions. For reimbursement of indirect costs, the applicant must include a copy of its indirect cost rate schedule with the application. Tuition shall be treated as an allowable cost, subject to negotiation, where reimbursement of such costs is not prohibited by law.



---

## **Peer Review of Applications**

All proposals received will be acknowledged. If you do not receive an acknowledgment within 30 days of the submission deadline, please contact the FANRP office at (202) 694-5466 or e-mail: FANRP@ers.usda.gov.

Prior to technical examination, a preliminary review will be made for meeting proposal eligibility requirements. Proposals that do not fall within the guidelines as stated in this document will be eliminated from program competition, and the applicant will be notified in writing.

Peer review panels will be convened to review proposals in each research area. All applicants will be notified in writing by September 30, 2010, as to whether their proposal has been accepted for an award by FANRP. Applications submitted through Grants.gov may be monitored online at the website and will also receive a written notice from the program office.

Peer review panel members will be selected based upon their training and experience in relevant research or technical fields, taking into account the following factors:

- The level of formal social science or technical education and other relevant experience of the individual as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research and other relevant activities;
- The need to include as peer reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant social science or technical fields;
- The need to include as peer reviewers experts from a variety of organizational types (for example, universities, government, industry, private consultant(s)) and geographic locations; and
- The need to include as peer reviewers individuals with relevant program knowledge and experience.

During the peer evaluation process, extreme care will be taken to prevent any actual or potential conflicts of interest that may have an impact on review or evaluation. Proposal content and peer evaluations will be kept confidential.



## **Evaluation Factors and Criteria**

The proposal evaluation process includes peer review panels consisting of experts from academia, government, and the private sector. In addition to reviewers' comments, FANRP's selection process considers coverage of priority research areas, overlap among proposals and ongoing projects, program needs, potential benefits resulting from research collaborations on particular projects, proposed research products, and the availability of funding.

The peer review panel will use the following criteria and weights to evaluate proposals (100 points total):

### ***Research Merit of the Proposal (weight: 35 points)***

This criterion is used to assess the conceptual adequacy of the hypothesis or research question, the clarity and delineation of objectives, the adequacy of the description of the undertaking, how the anticipated results will advance policy knowledge and the development and implementation of programs, and the suitability of the proposed research products for ERS publication. Background information should be brief for proposals that address one of the topics described on pages 3-6; a more extensive justification is needed for a proposal with a nonlisted topic.

### ***Overall Approach (weight: 30 points)***

This criterion relates to the probability of success of project; time allocated for systematic attainment of objectives; analytic approach; and research design, appropriateness of data, and suitability and feasibility of methodology.

### ***Workplan, Budget, and Cost-Effectiveness (weight: 20 points)***

This criterion relates to the extent to which the total budget adequately supports the project and is cost effective. The proposal should provide an explanation and justification for any large or unusual expenditures. Reviewers will evaluate if the workplan is reasonable and sufficient to ensure timely implementation and completion of the study. The workplan should also provide evidence of the adequacy of available or attainable support personnel, facilities, and instrumentation. When achievement of the workplan requires collaboration, evidence is needed of the adequacy of support from and commitment to cooperation from any collaborative organization.

### ***Key Personnel (weight: 15 points)***

This criterion relates to the adequacy of the number and qualifications of the key persons who will carry out the project. It also relates to their time committed to this project and to their availability.



---

## **How To Obtain Application Materials**

FANRP is using the Internet for primary distribution of information and application materials for its Competitive Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program. All applications must be submitted electronically through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Applicants may submit paper-copy applications under extenuating circumstances, such as outages of the Grants.gov website that can be substantiated by a valid case number with the Grants.gov support center. If you have questions, contact:

David Smallwood  
FANRP/ERS  
1800 M Street, NW, Room N2130  
Washington, DC 20036-5831  
Telephone: (202) 694-5466  
Fax: (202) 694-5677  
E-mail: FANRP@ers.usda.gov



# **Application Process**

## **Overview**

These guidelines are provided to assist you in preparing a proposal to the Competitive Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program of the Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program. Please read these guidelines carefully before preparing your submission.

A checklist is provided at the beginning of this document to help you provide the necessary information for completing a proposal. An Application for Federal Domestic Assistance Form (SF-424) and a budget form (SF-424A) are required for the proposal. These forms (from the Short Organizational family of forms) are included in the application package, downloadable from [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).

## **Submission Requirements**

The purpose of a grant or cooperative agreement proposal is to persuade FANRP and members of the food assistance and nutrition research community who provide advice to FANRP that the proposed project is important, methodologically sound, and worthy of support under the criteria listed on page 10. The application should be self-contained, should clearly present the merits of the proposed project, and should be written with care and thoroughness. It is important that all essential information for comprehensive evaluation be included. Omissions often result in processing delays and may jeopardize funding opportunities.

In preparing the proposal, applicants are urged to ensure that the name of the Principal Investigator and, where applicable, the name of the submitting institution are included on the Application for Federal Domestic Assistance Form (SF-424).

## **Format and Contents of Proposals**

For electronic submissions through Grants.gov, the proposal and all attachments must be submitted in portable document format (pdf). Using pdf allows applicants to preserve the formatting of their documents. In order to save a document as a pdf, the applicant will need to use pdf generator software. Grants.gov has published the following web page on tools and software that the applicant can use: [www.grants.gov/applicants/resources.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/applicants/resources.jsp)

### ***Application for Federal Domestic Assistance-Short Organizational (SF-424)***

The submission through Grants.gov must contain an Application for Federal Domestic Assistance-Short Organizational (SF-424), including authorized electronic signatures from your organization.



Table 2

**Specific instructions for Application for Federal Domestic Assistance-Short Organizational (SF-424)**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Specific instruction</b>
1. Name of Federal Agency	Enter "Economic Research Service, USDA"
2. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number  CDFA Title	Enter "10.253"  Enter "Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program"
3. Date Received	Leave blank
4. Funding Opportunity Number  Funding Opportunity Title	Enter "FANRP2010002"  Enter "Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program Fiscal 2010 Competitive Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program"
5 a-g. Applicant Information	Enter requested information
6a. Project Title	Enter title of project proposal
6b-c.	Leave blank
<b>7. Do not include social security number</b>	Enter other project director information
8-9.	Enter requested information

**Budget Information for Non-Construction Program (SF-424A)**

A summary budget is required detailing requested support for the overall project period, which is not to exceed 3 years. Funding levels accepted are between \$100,000 and \$400,000, inclusive of indirect cost where applicable, for the duration of the project (not to exceed 3 years).

Funds may be requested under any of the budget categories listed, provided that the item or service requested is identified as necessary for successful conduct of the proposed project, allowable under applicable Federal cost principles, and not prohibited under any applicable Federal statute or regulation.

Budget items include:

- Personnel
- Fringe benefits
- Travel
- Equipment
- Supplies
- Contractual
- Other direct costs
- Indirect charges



Salaries of faculty members and other personnel who will be working on the project may be requested in proportion to the effort they will devote to the project.

Electronic copies of the standard budget form and general instructions are available at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) as part of the application package. Specific instructions for completing the proposal budget form are found below.

Table 3  
**Specific instructions for Budget Information for Non-Construction Program (SF-424A)**

Item	Specific instruction
1(a). Grant Program Function or Activity	Enter “FANRP”
1(b). Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number	Enter “10.253”
1(c),(d),(f).	Leave blank
1(e),(g).	Enter amount of Federal funds requested
2-4.	Leave blank
5(b),(c),(d),(f).	Leave blank
5(e),(g).	Enter amount of Federal funds requested (Same as item 1)
6(a-k) (columns 1 and 5).	Allocate Federal funds requested to appropriate budget categories
6(a-k) (columns 2-4).	Leave blank
7-20.	Leave blank
21-23.	Optional

### ***Project Summary Page***

The proposal must start with a Project Summary Page that includes:

- The names and institutions of the Principal Investigator, co-investigators, and subcontractors;
- The total amount of funding requested;
- The project start and end dates; and
- A Project Summary of 250 words.

The summary is not intended for the general reader; consequently, it may contain technical language comprehensible by persons in disciplines relating to the food and agricultural sciences. The project summary should be a self-contained, specific description of the activity to be undertaken and should focus on overall project goal(s), supporting objectives, and plans to accomplish project goal(s).



The importance of a concise, informative project summary cannot be overemphasized. The Project Summary Page should not include a page number.

### ***Table of Contents***

A Table of Contents, itself unpaginated, should be placed immediately after the Project Summary Page. This table should direct the reader to the pages for all sections of the proposal, beginning with the Project Description on page 1.

### ***Project Description***

The description may not exceed 15 pages (whether single- or double-spaced) of written text and may not exceed a total of 20 pages, including figures and tables. The proposal should be assembled so that the Project Description immediately follows the Project Summary and Table of Contents. To clarify page limitation requirements, page numbering for the Project Description should start with 1, and should be placed on the bottom of the page. The page limitations do not include attachments, such as the survey instrument (if relevant). All proposals are to be formatted for standard 8½” x 11” paper. In addition, margins must be at least 1 inch, type size must be 12 point (equivalent to this size for some printers is 10 pitch or 10 characters per inch, which is also acceptable), there should be no more than six (6) lines per inch. The project description must contain the following components:

- *Introduction.* A clear statement of the long-term goal(s) and supporting objectives or research questions of the proposed project should be included. The most significant published work in the field under consideration, including the work of key project personnel on the current application, should be reviewed. The current status of research in this field should also be described.
- *Rationale and Significance.* Concisely present the rationale behind the proposed research. The objectives' specific relationship to the potential long-term improvement in the efficiency of USDA's food assistance and nutrition programs should be shown clearly. These purposes are described under Priority Research Areas beginning on page 3. Any novel ideas or contributions that the proposed project offers should also be discussed in this section.
- *Research Methods.* The hypotheses or questions being asked and the methodology being applied to the proposed project should be stated explicitly. This section must include:
  - A description of the proposed research in the sequence in which it is to be performed;
  - Techniques to be used in carrying out the proposed project, including the feasibility of the techniques;
  - Explanation of data collection methods, including interviewer training, sample design and selection, and measures for obtaining adequate response rates (for proposed projects that plan to collect survey data);
  - Results expected;
  - Means by which data will be analyzed or interpreted;
  - Discussion of relevant variables and of model specification issues (for proposed projects that plan to use multivariate analysis);



- Possible application of results;
- Pitfalls that may be encountered;
- Limitations to proposed procedures;
- A tentative schedule or workplan for conducting major steps of study, including a staffing plan;
- A budget narrative; and
- Identification of research reports and outlets.

The workplan should include sufficient detail so that reviewers can ascertain the roles and level of involvement of assigned staff. The workplan should also include a budget narrative that briefly describes how the requested funds will be spent, including specifics on travel, equipment, and personnel. Funded projects should anticipate two briefings at ERS headquarters: one at the start of the project and one at the completion.

### ***Proposed Research Products***

All applications must propose at least one of three types of publications as an anticipated output:

- *ERS Report*. These are official ERS Departmental reports, include an ERS co-author, and are cleared by USDA's Office of Communications.
- *Contractor and Cooperator Report (CCR)*. These reports, authored solely by non-ERS staff, will be posted at the National Agricultural Library. Unlike ERS reports, it is the responsibility of the awardee's institution to conduct the review of the report. The review shall include the ERS project manager. All Contractor and Cooperator Reports are required to contain the following disclaimer:

*Disclaimer: This study was conducted by [Institution] under a cooperative research contract with USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) Food and Nutrition Assistance Research Program (FANRP): contract number XXX (ERS project representative: [Name]). The views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of ERS or USDA.*

Applications proposing Contractor and Cooperator Reports should include a brief description of how the [Institution] will conduct the review. The final report will be submitted to ERS, together with the reviewers' comments provided through the proposed process and a memo describing how the comments were addressed.

- *Journal Article*. Research findings can also be published in appropriate professional journals.

Applications may propose additional products such as other reports and journal articles as well as data products and conference presentations.

***Note: The sections detailed below are not included in the page limitations for the Project Description section.***



### ***Citations to Project Description***

All references cited should be complete, including titles and all co-authors, and should conform to an accepted journal format.

### ***Collaborative Arrangements***

If the nature of the proposed project requires collaboration or subcontractual arrangements with other research scientists, corporations, organizations, agencies, or entities, the applicant must identify the collaborator(s) and provide a full explanation of the nature of the collaboration. Evidence (that is, letters of intent) should be provided to assure peer reviewers that the collaborators involved have agreed to render this service.

When a project requests funds for multiple institutions, a lead institution must be designated. Only one proposal may be submitted for the project and only from the lead institution. Other institutions may be designated as subcontractors. Proposals with Application for Funding Cover Pages from more than one institution are not permitted and will be returned without review. Identical proposals submitted by different investigators from different institutions are also not permitted and will be returned without review.

### ***Vitae and Publications List(s)***

To assist peer reviewers in assessing the competence and experience of the proposed project staff, all personnel who will be involved in the proposed project must be identified clearly. For the Principal Investigator and each co-investigator listed on the Application for Funding Cover Page, for all collaborators and other senior personnel who expect to work on the project in a significant fashion (for instance, expectation of co-authorships on ensuing publications) whether or not funds are sought for their support, and for all subcontractors, the following should be included:

- *Curriculum Vitae (CV).* The curriculum vitae should be limited to a presentation of academic and research credentials, such as educational, employment, and professional history, honors, and awards. The vitae shall be no more than two pages each in length, excluding publications listings; and
- *Publications List(s).* A chronological list of all publications in refereed journals during the past 5 years, including those in press, must be provided for each professional project member for whom a curriculum vitae is provided. Also list only those non-refereed technical publications relevant to the proposed project. All authors should be listed in the same order as they appear on each paper cited, along with the title and complete references as these usually appear in journals.

### ***Indirect Cost Rate Schedule***

For reimbursement of indirect costs, the applicant must include with the application a copy of its indirect cost rate schedule that reports the applicant's federally negotiated audited rate.



### ***Current and Pending Support***

The information in this section of the proposal provides reviewers with an opportunity to evaluate the contribution the proposed work will make to the investigators' overall research program.

The proposal must list any other current public or private research support (including in-house support) to the Principal Investigator or co-investigators, whether or not salary support for the person(s) involved is included in the budget. FANRP must be informed of changes in pending grant support that arise after the proposal has been submitted. Nonflexible funds—including Principal Investigator and support staff salaries, office space, and other indirect costs—may be excluded when these funds are received through a noncompetitive process. Analogous information must be provided for any pending proposals, including this proposal, that are now being considered by, or that will be submitted in the near future to, other possible sponsors, including other USDA programs or agencies. Note that this proposal must be listed as Pending. In addition to completing the information, Investigators also should include a brief statement of research objectives or project summaries for all projects listed in Current and Pending Support. Concurrent submission of identical or similar proposals to other possible sponsors will not prejudice proposal review or evaluation by the Program Manager or experts engaged by the Program Manager for this purpose. However, a proposal that duplicates or overlaps substantially with a proposal already reviewed and funded (or that will be funded) by FANRP will not be funded under this program.

Please include the following information under the heading “Current and Pending Support”:

- Record information for active and pending projects in separate sections by name, supporting agency, total funding amount, effective and expiration dates, percentage of time committed, and title of project.
- All current research to which the Principal Investigator, co-investigators, and other senior personnel have committed a portion of their time must be listed, whether or not salary for the person involved is included in the budgets of the various projects.

### ***Additions to Project Description***

Each project description is expected to be complete without the need to refer to additional materials. However, additions to the Project Description (appendices) are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed research. These may include reprints (papers that have been published in peer-reviewed journals) or preprints (manuscripts in press for a peer-reviewed journal must be accompanied by letter of acceptance from the publishing journal).

Information may not be appended to a proposal to circumvent page limitations prescribed for the project description. Extraneous materials will not be used during the review process.



### ***What/When/Where To Submit***

All applications must be submitted electronically through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Applicants may submit paper-copy applications under extenuating circumstances, such as outages of the Grants.gov website that can be substantiated by a valid case number with the Grants.gov support center.

Every effort should be made to ensure that the proposal contains all pertinent information when originally submitted. Prior to submitting, it is urged that the application be compared with the checklist on the inside front cover of this announcement.

Late proposals will not be considered unless extenuating circumstances are documented with Grants.gov.

**Reminder: Applications must be submitted by April 12, 2010**



---

## **Award Administration**

FANRP reserves the right to negotiate with the Principal Investigator or project director and/or with the submitting organization or institution regarding project revisions (for example, reductions in the scope of work), funding level, or period or method of support prior to recommending any project for funding.

A proposal may be withdrawn by the Principal Investigator at any time before a final funding decision is made regarding the proposal; however, withdrawn proposals normally will not be returned. One copy of each proposal that is not selected for funding (including those that are withdrawn) will be retained by FANRP for a period of one (1) year. The remaining copies will be destroyed.

### **Duration of Awards**

The total period for which a grant or cooperative agreement is awarded may not exceed 3 years.

### **Management Information**

Once a grant or cooperative agreement has been reviewed and recommended for funding, specific management and organizational information relating to the applicant shall be requested on a one-time basis prior to the award. Copies of forms needed in fulfilling the requirements will be provided by the FANRP office.

### **Notice of Award**

A competitive grant or cooperative agreement award document, containing the budget, terms and conditions of the award, and other necessary information, will be prepared and forwarded to each grantee or cooperator, along with a Notice of Competitive Grant or Cooperative Agreement Award, by the Administrative and Financial Management, ARS, USDA.

### **Financial Obligations**

For any competitive grant or cooperative agreement awarded, the maximum financial obligation of ERS shall be the amount of funds authorized for the award. This amount will be stated on the award instrument and on the approved budget. However, in the event an erroneous amount is stated on the grant award instrument, the approved budget, or any supporting document, ERS reserves the unilateral right to make the correction and to make an appropriate adjustment in the amount of the award to align with the authorized amount.

Nothing in these guidelines or any program announcement shall obligate ERS, the Department, or the United States to take favorable action on any application received in response to any announcement, or to support any project at a particular level. Further, neither the approval of any application nor the award of any project grant or cooperative agreement shall commit or obligate the United States in any way to make any renewal, supplemental, continuation, or other award with respect to any approved application or portion of an approved application.

Awardees will be required to ensure that all funds are expended in accordance with the terms and conditions of grant or cooperative agreement award, Departmental regulations, and the applicable Federal cost principles in effect on the date of the award. Responsibility for the use and expenditure of grant or cooperative agreement funds may not be transferred or delegated in whole or in



part to another party (even if a grantee or cooperator enters into a contractual relationship with that party), unless the grant or cooperative agreement itself is transferred in whole or in part to another party by ERS.

Authorization to make changes in approved project plans, budget, period of support, etc., will be governed largely by the terms and conditions of the competitive grant award or cooperative agreement. Among other things, these terms and conditions will set forth the kinds of post-award changes that may be made by the awardee and the kinds of changes that are reserved to the FANRP Office. It is urged that all key project personnel and authorized organizational representatives read them carefully.

### **Release of Information**

ERS receives grant and cooperative agreement proposals in confidence and will protect the confidentiality of their contents to the extent permitted by law. When a proposal results in a grant or cooperative agreement, however, it becomes part of the public record and is available to the public upon written request. Copies of proposals (including excerpts from proposals) that are not funded will not be released. Information regarding funded projects will be made available to the extent permitted under the Freedom of Information Act, the Privacy Act, and implementing USDA regulations.

Requests to obtain authorized information (and fee schedule relating to the handling of this information) or to obtain information regarding procedures related to release of grantor cooperative agreement information should be directed to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Coordinator, ARS Information Staff, 5601 Sunnyside Ave., Bldg. 1, Rm. 2248, Mail Stop 5128, Beltsville, MD 20705-5128; telephone (301) 504-1640.

